
NORTH CAROLINA'S PHRST LINE REPORT

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PHRST in Phlight!

A Special Report from PHRST 1

Dare County was the site of the "First Flight Centennial" celebration that drew national and international attention during the week of December 12–17. The Dare County Health Department invited PHRST 1 and PHP&R to assist in providing disease surveillance as it was expected to be a very high profile event. This afforded a unique opportunity to not only conduct disease surveillance, but also to participate in a well-organized incident command system that involved an incredible number of diverse organizations. In addition, public health staff witnessed an extraordinarily high level of security for a large event involving many high profile individuals including President George W. Bush. Federal agencies such as the US Park Service, the US Public Health Service, the FBI, and the Secret Service worked seamlessly with a multitude of state and local agencies, the military, and several private entities to assure public safety throughout the six-day event.

During the celebration there were two emergency medical stations staffed by physicians and nurses. Emergency Medical Services teams roamed throughout the park to provide emergency care for visitors and staff. Each day throughout the event health data was obtained from the emergency medicine stations, EMS teams, and the Outer Banks Hospital Emergency Department to determine if there were any unusual symptoms or trends reported. The two stations on site as well as the hospital emergency department reported their health data every hour to a central database where the PHRST Physician Epidemiologist reviewed trends. Although health data obtained during the First Flight Centennial did not identify any unusual trends, we did affirm the belief that it is possible to quickly collect and review real-time health data to determine trends during a large event.

During the First Flight Centennial staff from the health department, PHRST 1 and PHP&R were able to test and use recently acquired UHF and VHF radios, allowing us to gain a better understanding of their use and limitations. In addition, two employees from the Radiation Protection Unit in DENR joined the public health efforts and provided radiological surveillance throughout the event. They were integrated into the security plans and provided a very valuable resource to the event.

PHRST 1 would like to acknowledge the excellent planning, support and work provided by staff from Dare County Health Department, Dare County Emergency Services, Outer Banks Hospital and the physicians from ECU's Brody School of Medicine. Thanks to their work providing information about medical/health related complaints during the event we will continue to realize lessons learned from participating in the First Flight Centennial for many months.

State Office Reports

"One Medicine" Symposium is Singular Event

Representatives from more than 35 states attended the "One-Medicine Approach to Homeland Security" symposium in December sponsored by the Emergency Programs Division of the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, PHP&R, and the UNC School of Public Health.

Almost all of the veterinarians and public health practitioners from across the country who attended the symposium rated the program, which focused on a coordinated approach to homeland security, as excellent or good. The two-day event focused on promoting close cooperation by human and veterinary health professionals when responding to terrorism and natural disasters. Drawing on the expertise of guest speakers and employing roundtable discussions and tabletop exercises, the symposium addressed issues such as food security, bioterrorism threats to animal health, detection of problems, and the use of emerging technologies. Speakers included nationally recognized experts in food security, disease detection and disaster response.

Training Calendar Now on Line!

Since joining us in November, Barbara Callahan has been working furiously to bring all things related to "Training and Education" up to speed. One of her most visible and useful products is the training calendar that is now on the web. It can be accessed through the [PHP&R](http://www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/phpr/calendar.html) web site drop-down menu or directly at <http://www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/phpr/calendar.html>.



Bladen, Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke, Johnston, Lee, Moore, Richmond, Robeson, Sampson, Scotland, Wayne

Industrial Hygienist Brian Combs attended a seminar in Asheville last December titled, "Death Labs: Protecting our children from Methamphetamine." Featured topics were "Methamphetamine: What Should I Know?" by Van Shaw, "A Collaborative Response" by Watauga County Meth Lab Response Team, and "Protecting Our Children" by Dr. Andrew Mason.

Brian also attended the "One Medicine Approach to Homeland Security" in December and represented PHRST 3 at the January RAC Combined Disaster Preparedness Subcommittee meeting in Raleigh.

In January Brian and Epidemiologist Wanda Tart attended and completed the DHS and ODP Threat and Risk Assessment Course. Participants included many different emergency response partners in the Cumberland County area and the course was designed to prepare leaders to prevent, respond to, and recover from a WMD terrorism incident. Activities involved lectures, group discussions, on-site surveys, and assessments. The Fayetteville Police Department and the Fayetteville Fire Department hosted the course. Time was also allocated for learning the needs assessment tool used by county emergency management to evaluate gaps in current response capability and the desired capabilities of responders. A related on-line course is "[Terrorism Awareness for Emergency First Responder](#)." This course is provided at no charge by the National Emergency Response & Rescue Training Center.

PHRST-3 members attended two PIO training workshops held at Cumberland County Health Department. The first workshop, "Media Training," was conducted by Mitzi Champion, the Cumberland County PIO. Doug Haas from NC Emergency Management conducted the second workshop, "The Risk Communication Process."

Wanda joined the Cape Fear Valley Medical Center SARS Task Force on January 14. The discussion explored SARS response roles of public health, EMS and the hospital. The task force will continue to meet to keep open communication and dialogue in preparation of a possible SARS outbreak in the community.

Brian and Wanda also met with Emergency Management in Cumberland County and toured the Emergency Operations Center. A Respiratory Protection Overview was presented to agency representatives and plans were made to conduct a Train-the-Trainer workshop for area responders.

PHRST 3 members are also helping a regional planning group create a tabletop exercise scheduled for later this year to test local response to a terrorist event. A scenario is being written and various objectives have been identified geared toward identifying strengths and weaknesses in the coordinated response plan.

PHRST 3 is planning the next two Region 3 Health Directors Conferences. Tentative dates are February 25 and May 26. Agendas are forthcoming and will be driven by input from county health directors. PHRST 3 plans to present the newly designed county profile tool whose components were suggested by the counties during November's Region 3 Health Directors Conference.

PHRST 3 also regularly counsels counties regarding contract addenda questions. Regional planning continues with the goal of being an asset to each county as they prepare to build infrastructure and increase response capabilities.



Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, Yancey

Congratulations to Wendy Kady for earning her Industrial Hygiene Certification. The testing process is grueling and rigorous with a pass rate of only 38 percent!

Congratulations are also in order for Epidemiologist Pat Fugate for completing the UNC-CH Community Preparedness and Disaster Management Certification Course. This is a year-long, cutting-edge program at UNC-CH that covers all aspects of emergency response.

PHRST 6 provided their first Public Health ICS training in Macon County in January with 14 participants attending the course. The local emergency management director assisted with the course and taught the Unified Command section. PHRST 6 expected to have shared this consolidated curriculum with other PHRSTs by the time this newsletter was circulated (late January) and will be teaching it in other Region 6 health departments.

PHRST 6 participated in Macon County's "Holiday Snow" tabletop exercise in January. Forty participants, including Emergency Management, EMS, health department, local government, media, hospital, and other

preparedness partners attended. Pat assisted Bob Scott from WCU and Ann Nandrea from Macon County Public Health Center in planning and facilitating an imaginative and involving scenario.

PHRST 6 members are helping to plan and conduct exercises in Burke, Cherokee, and Graham counties that will involve Mission Hospitals, the region's tertiary care center. A regional exercise in the Unifour Counties is also in the works that will provide PHRSTs 6 and 7 the opportunity to work together.

PHRST 6 is a participant in Cherokee County's Forensic Epidemiology team called the "EOC Leadership Group." Haywood County will have its first Forensic Epi meeting on February 11, and PHRST 6 members will assist.

The Buncombe Regional Lab is nearing completion with estimated occupancy in early March. Mary Edwards has worked hard to keep up with county logistics, ordering schedules, and oversight of construction while she has been building partnerships with regional and local laboratories.



Alexander, Anson, Cabarrus, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly and Union

PHRST 7 met on two occasions with members of Cabarrus County's emergency response teams to discuss the North Carolina public health protocol for responding to suspicious powders and materials and to explain activities and roles of a regional surveillance team. The Cabarrus Health Alliance hosted one meeting where members of the Health Alliance and members of Cabarrus County Emergency Management were introduced to the protocol. The meeting prompted much discussion focusing on roles and responsibilities of the various responding agencies. The Cabarrus County Fire Department hosted the second meeting where members of PHRST 7, the regional veterinary field response specialist, and the regional laboratorian of the new regional lab in Mecklenburg County were introduced to the Cabarrus County Special Hazards Response Team. This team consists of law enforcement, public health, fire, HazMat, and other local agencies. These meetings provided excellent venues for PHRST 7 to meet with many in the Cabarrus responder community and discuss issues they have encountered.

Editor's Note:

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide information briefs that are useful and timely. It is designed to be scanned quickly to determine topics of interest and then provide pertinent information in two or three paragraphs. The primary contributors to the newsletter are the Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response and the state's seven Public Health Regional Surveillance Teams. This is because the PHRST Line Report is one of our primary communication tools as well as an historical record of our efforts. Topics submitted by counties, partners and stakeholders are also welcome as they pertain to bioterrorism and natural outbreak preparedness. Submissions should be e-mailed to our editor at Bill.Furney@ncmail.net.

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